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THE

PITTS-STREET CHAPEL

LECTURES.

DELIVERED IN BOSTON BY CLERGYMEN OF SIX DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS, DURING THE WINTER OF 1858.

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"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." — 1 Pet. iii. 15

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FOURTH LECTURE.

BY

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PASTOR OF THE ESSEX STREET CHURCH.

IV.

WHY AM I A TRINITARIAN CONGREGATIONALIST?

"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." — 1 Cor. ii. 2.

The question to be answered in this discourse, is, "Why am I, from love to God and man, a Trinitarian Congregationalist?"

Christianity, no doubt, began with one form of church government, and one system of ordinances; for the same reason that it had, of course, a definite system of fundamental truths. Some of our modern Christian missions among a heathen or pagan people, probably afford a good illustration of the beginning and early progress of Christianity. The missionaries are at first necessarily the controlling power in the churches, which they gather, while they are constantly aiming at the preparation of the native converts to supply their churches with native pastors, and to transact their own affairs independently of foreign aid, except so far as they may associate themselves as churches, for mutual counsel, yet without jurisdiction. But the missionaries thenceforth cease to exercise any official influence. This

seems to us the natural order in which the first Christian churches arose, each of them containing within itself the elements of government and discipline.

In the first chapter of the Acts, we find the body of the disciples choosing even an apostle, to supply the place of Judas. This is fatal, we think, to all claim of apostolical succession in the ministry; for, if the apostles had not power even to fill a vacancy in their own number, the right of appointing ministers was not peculiar to them. In the sixth chapter of the Acts, "the multitude of the disciples" also "chose deacons." Some of them preached; but this was wholly independent of the object for which they were chosen; because in giving the reason for the appointment of deacons, the apostles drew a distinction between "the ministry of the word," and "serving tables."* Thus in the Christian church, at the very beginning, the people, and not the apostles and ministry, were the appointing power.

When local churches were established, the disciples no longer acted in one body, as they did at first in Jerusalem. Paul writes "to the church at Corinth" respecting the discipline, by the church itself, of an incestuous member. He speaks of "the churches," not of "the church," of Macedonia, Galatia, and Judea. As an inspired apostle, he felt at liberty to exhort, rebuke, and teach the churches which he had founded,

* Acts vi. 2, 4.

while each of them was, nevertheless, a self-governing body. The Savior, also, directed his messages in the Revelation, to local "churches" — not to the "Church of Asia," but to the separate bodies of believers in different places, each of them having a separate existence, with an individual character and history, for which it was approved or blamed. This congregational form of church organization we believe to have been the original divine pattern; the apostles, like the first missionaries to a people, having had no successors in their peculiar relation, but the pastor and the church-officers of each body of believers taking their place. This is the impression which the New Testament makes upon us, and this is the origin of our Congregational order.

The theory of some is, that the order of apostles, as distinguished from the rest of the ministry, was designed to be perpetually represented in the Christian church by "bishops." But we are expressly told, that the difference between the apostles and other ministers was this: The apostles were *inspired witnesses* of Christ.* Therefore Peter moved the disciples to fill the place of Judas, saying, "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us — beginning from the baptism of John unto the same day that he was taken up

* Acts i., 21, 22.

from us — must one be ordained *to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*" * Paul vindicates his claim to the apostleship, by saying, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" this being equivalent to the evidence which the other apostles had had, that Christ was risen. Therefore, all who claim to be successors of the apostles, are indeed, like Paul, "born out of due season," but with no miracle, as he had, to atone for it. Their assumption that the apostles transmitted their office, is singularly confuted by some of their own writers when assailing the Papacy. Dr. Barrow, in his "Pope's Supremacy," says, "Such an office [the apostolic] *was not designed to continue by derivation.*" Again: "Neither did the apostles pretend to communicate it." He quotes Bellarmine, who says: "And the bishops have no part of the true apostolic authority." † It is also conceded by writers on Episcopacy, that "the terms 'bishop,' and 'elder,' or 'presbyter,' were, in the first instance, and for a short period, sometimes used synonymously, and indiscriminately applied to the same order in the ministry." ‡ "The *name* bishop, which now designates the highest grade of the ministry, is not appropriate to that office in Scripture. That name is given to presbyters or elders." § "The best

* Acts 1: 21–22.

† Quoted in "View of Congregationalism, by George Punchard," pp. 77, 78. This book cannot be too strongly recommended.

‡ Waddington's Hist. of the Church, ch. II., § 2. "View of C." p. 97

§ Onderdonk's Episcopacy Tested. p. 12. Do. do.

commentators, ancient and modern, have with reason inferred that the terms, [elder and bishop,] as yet denoted the same thing."*

Thus we find Congregationalism at the pure fountain head of Christianity. The first Christians began to conduct their affairs as a body of modern Congregationalists would do. If, at a subsequent time, the churches adopted different methods and rules, they departed from the original pattern. We base our form of church government on the very first acts of the Christian church after the ascension of Christ.

We do not find in Christ, and the apostles, and deacons, that model of three orders in the ministry the want of which, in the view of some, disfranchises the ministry of all Christendom except that of one denomination. For, if Christ was the great archetype of "Bishops," who among the apostles took his place when he died? and who, at any time, was his first successor? That deacons were not a clerical order has already been proved by the distinction which the apostles expressly made between the employment of deacons and "the ministry of the word." And the same arguments by which "three orders" would be proved to be essential in the Christian ministry could be used to prove that others were necessary: — "for He gave some, prophets, — and some, evangelists."

* Bloomfield's note on Acts xx. 17. — See Punchard's View of Congregationalism, p. 97.

Many expressions might be cited from the great Apostle to the Gentiles which manifestly show that he was jealous for the liberty with which Christ had made his followers free from every yoke of bondage. Some of the half converted Jews sought to impose certain rites and ceremonies, and the observance of days, upon them. Paul, writing to the Galatians, and others, seems to have been indignant at this, and it was because Peter 'used dissimulation' on this subject that Paul 'withstood him because he was to be blamed.'

I forbear to put to sea, even coastwise, on the dark waters of ecclesiastical history. I have thus far confined myself to the New Testament. My own belief, — for the reasons named, and others might be given if this service allowed a full statement of them rather than an outline, — is, that the original model of Christian churches was one which secured to each body of believers the control of its own government and instruction. If this be granted, we are not careful to ascertain infallibly by what servants every church managed its affairs; but at the same time we do think that such officers as a Congregational Church now employs, and such only, are in the highest measure consonant with the possession and exercise by the body of believers, of liberty and self control. Yet it would violate this beautiful and noble idea of independency, to maintain that even a Congregational

Church, in the first century or now, could not institute, for the time being, an order of helpers in addition to those originally designated. Let the habits or prejudices of a people, for example, make it inexpedient for men to visit the sick, indiscriminately, for charitable purposes; the same necessity which suggested the idea of deacons, might make an order of deaconesses proper; and so we think the churches occasionally provided themselves with new internal arrangements, for religious purposes. Local circumstances, having their origin, if you please to call it so, in human frailties, soon led to discrepancies and divisions; and moreover, things which were adopted temporarily at first, began to claim divine authority, and fastened themselves to the church as a part of itself.

We believe the Congregational form of church order to be the most favorable to the interests of the individual and of religion at large. Most if not all the objections to it lie equally against the preparedness or the capacity of men for self government; but to educate them for this, they must have responsibility laid upon them at the earliest possible moment, even at the risk of serious temporary mistakes. We hold that all who are capable of managing their own temporal concerns, and are qualified for admission to the Christian church, ought to have the entire control of their ecclesiastical affairs, and that the exercise of such control is one of the best means to develope private

character, and to give early vigor and stability to Christian institutions. Thomas Jefferson said that a little Baptist Church near his house in Virginia, which was governed on Congregational principles, was probably the only form of pure democracy which then existed in the world. The Church of Jesus Christ enjoys the right, derived from Him, and the ability, to use this form of government; which none of the princes of this world think it safe nor convenient for men to have in national affairs. We are in favor of this system as enabling each church to settle its own business and its difficulties within its own walls, or at the furthest, by consulting only a few neighbor churches, instead of agitating the whole body of churches in a section of the country, or being compelled to seek judicial decisions from the whole ministry when a few neighboring pastors and Christian brethren are as well able to issue them. We all have our difficult questions, cases of discipline, and, now and then, contentions; but that system of drainage is the best which conducts offensive things quietly beneath the surface, instead of spreading them for inspection and judgment over a large district on their way to oblivion.

Such ministers as Cotton, Wilson, Hooker, Stone, Davenport, and others, beneficed clergymen in England, having fled from an established religion, and from what they deemed a yoke of bondage in religious forms and ordinances, devised a system between Inde-

pendency, which is the present Baptist form of Congregationalism, on the one hand, and Presbyterianism on the other. This was New England Congregationalism. It had a powerful reflex influence on the Puritans in the mother country, till, in the time of Cromwell, and under his protection, Congregationalism, or, as it was still called, Independency, made great progress, and at the present day it is an important and hopeful religious element in England, under the name of Congregationalism, where we cannot but think it is destined to accomplish a great work. Let us not be understood as maintaining the idea that a modern Congregational Church is, in all respects, the exact copy of a primitive, Christian church; all we claim is, that in our fundamental idea of self-government we retain the primitive type; and moreover we say, that whatever offices in a church impair the direct, immediate control, by a church, of its own affairs, did not exist in the first Christian churches, and they are repudiated now by Congregationalism. It differs from Episcopacy and from Episcopal Methodism, in confining the whole power of control within itself. It also differs from Methodism as to the system of individual accountability, which, in the Methodist communion, with its class-leaders reporting weekly to the minister the circumstances, more or less minutely, of each individual in the church, constitutes an authority from which, for many reasons, we prefer to be free. It differs from

Presbyterianism, is that the whole body of the church, and not a delegated part of it, transacts its affairs; and also, in not being accountable to extraneous authority, such as Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. It differs from Independency, or Baptist Congregationalism, in that it recognizes a relationship on the part of each church, to sister churches, in the way of counsel and mutual admonition, without the least subjection to foreign control, however; each church, in the last resort, having liberty to be, in every sense, Independent. Now in this particular feature of Congregationalism, as distinguished from the Independency of the Baptist churches, we have scriptural examples. The first churches interchanged special acts of fellowship; they found it needful and profitable, and it was natural and pleasant, so to do. It was one of the expedient and useful things suggested by the social nature of our religion. We read, for example, of "the brother" who was "chosen of *the churches*" to travel with their contributions; and, also, of these brethren, the messengers *of the churches*.*

We believe in the parity of the clergy. We find no foundation in the word of God for official precedence among ministers of the gospel. While ordination is necessary to constitute a man a minister, for the same reasons that the marriage ceremony is neces-

* 1 Cor. VIII., 18–23.

sary to complete a marriage contract, and while ministers alone can properly perform the public services of ordaining, we believe that "mutual election is that which doth essentiate the relation of a pastor to this or that particular church."* We hold that churches, upon conference by their pastors and delegates, have the power to place men in the ministry as evangelists, or without pastoral charge. We believe that there is no office of "priests" in the Christian church.

It is a fundamental principle with us that the whole church, and not merely the pastor, nor a delegated body, shall have entire control in the admission and exclusion of members. This we think essential to the interests of religious liberty, a safeguard against clerical assumption, and against oligarchy. We are very strenuous for this principle, for with a great sum we purchased this freedom. It was for this, and for the associated right of electing our own religious teachers, and to be emancipated from the dictation of civil and ecclesiastical rulers, that we came out of great tribulation, the Puritans seeking refuge in Geneva, and in Holland, and finally in this waste howling wilderness.

The Pilgrim Fathers of New England were Congregationalists; the Mayflower was a Congregational Bethel; Plymouth Rock was at first the corner

* Increase Mathers' Sermon, at the ordination of Rev. Mr. Appleton, Cambridge. See Cong. Dict., p. 264.

stone of a Congregational church. It was the bringing of Congregationalism here which gave an origin and early history to New England such as no other nation but the Hebrew has enjoyed.

As to the ordering of public worship, we prefer extemporaneous prayers, and passages of Scripture selected for the occasion, to the use of forms however unexceptionable or excellent. The power of adaptation to passing circumstances and frames of mind, the agreeable effect of variety in extemporaneous services, and the prominence thereby given to the preaching of the Gospel by enabling us to make the other parts of the service promote the effect of that great, divinely-appointed means of salvation, lead us to prefer our mode of worship to liturgical forms.

We believe that all modes of Baptism are valid. But we believe that, in some cases mentioned in the New Testament, immersion was impossible, and moreover that there is no case in which the probabilities are not on the side of some form of affusion. This mode is consonant with the liberal and pliant nature of Christianity, which, if immersion alone were valid, could not bestow its great initiating rite on the sick, on prisoners, on people at sea, in desert places, and in latitudes of extreme frost.

We believe that children are connected with their believing parents in the covenant promises of God, and that Baptism is given to them by God as his seal of

that covenant,—it being not our act, primarily, and not merely signifying consecration, but it is the act of God, sealing his promise and constituting a memorial on his part, and on the part of the parents and child. The connection of children with their parents, for good or ill, we see to be as old as the parental and filial relations.

It was specially recognised at the call of Abraham to be the founder of the church of believers in all ages of the world. A special re-appointment by Christ of this covenant relation, and the use of the initiating seal for the time being, we suppose would have been as superfluous, as would have been the re-publication by Christ of the commandment to keep holy one seventh part of time. The mention of the baptism of households by the apostles falls in naturally with our belief and confirms it.

Now, upon such things as these, relating to rites and forms, evangelical Christians differ, and separate into sects, each of them, however, professing to be animated by a higher motive than to promote its own peculiarities; but being persuaded that the conversion of the world to God, through the propitiation for sin, can best be effected, so far as they are concerned, by their being respectively employed under their several forms of church order.

That Congregationalism is perfectly adapted to the

highest state of human society, and is an adequate means to bring society into that state, we see in the early history of New England, its schools, colleges, churches, ministry, benevolent associations, the arts and sciences, and all that makes life happy. "The gold of that land is good; there is bdellium and the onyx stone." God brought the puritans here, and has wrought out by means of them the problem of man's capacity for self government in religion. If any inquire, what is the moral and religious influence of Congregationalism compared with other systems, we have only to mention, *New England*, where it has had its perfect work. With that result we are so far satisfied that we are willing to see rising communities, in our own and other lands, make trial of this system. Our New England Congregational Churches, with their fruits, stand before the world as an illustration of the practicability and safety of entrusting religious authority in the hands of the people themselves. We have less than two thousand Congregational Churches in the whole United States, including both Trinitarian and Unitarian Congregationalists, the latter having about three hundred churches, while the Presbyterians have four thousand churches, the Regular Baptists eight thousand, and the Methodists twelve thousand.

If it be said that if the Pilgrim Fathers had happened to be of any other denomination, New England might have been all which it now is, we answer, It was in

order to be Congregationalists that they came here, Congregationalism brought them here; it formed their institutions. It was because they lived on the pulse and water of Congregationalism that they thrived more than all they which did eat of the king's meat. Congregationalism as illustrated by them, stands ready to be adopted by other communities as fast as circumstances call for it. Our numerical disproportion ought to prevent us from adopting the narrow minded delusion that we are anything more than an important element in a great system of human society, while we cannot but feel grateful that God has, by these New England institutions, demonstrated the inherent excellence of the Congregational system.

Having alluded to the reasons why we differ from the Episcopalians, and also from the Independency of the Baptists, and from the latter also with respect to the mode and subjects of baptism, I will briefly allude to the discrepancies of faith between us and the Methodists, though in doing so I depart a little from the plan which I have proposed in the discourse, viz: to speak of doctrinal subjects last, and by themselves. But for the sake of finishing the subject of denominational differences of opinion, I will venture to refer, here, to the chief articles of faith in which the Methodists and the Congregationalists, the Arminian and the Calvinist, do not agree.

Our Methodist brethren sometimes call us "partial-

ists," because, as Congregationalists, Baptists, and, to so great a degree, Episcopalians, we believe in the infinite grace of God, determining to make willing and to save some of our fallen race, all of whom, if left to themselves, would have perished. The Methodist does not see how this belief allows liberty to man, and how it is consistent with offering salvation fully and freely to every human being. These offers, however, we all make as much as they; as our English Baptist brother, Andrew Fuller, whose system of divinity is esteemed by us second only to that of Jonathan Edwards, has shown for us in his Treatise on the Freeness of the Gospel.

We believe in the foreordination of every thing which ever comes to pass, even the actions of men and angels, and thus we rejoice that we have a God whose perfect administration can never be disturbed by any contingency, or by an event so small as not to have been contemplated and pre-arranged. While we believe this, we are not fatalists; for we are equally strenuous in our belief that the fore-knowledge of God, and his perfect control of his creatures, are not his misfortune, incapacitating him from having a moral government; but, on the contrary, that men are as responsible and accountable as though there were no divine foreknowledge. If we are asked how we reconcile such contradictory propositions, we answer, They do not fall out, and so we have no need to reconcile

them. They live together peaceably in our hearts, except when any are disposed to provoke them against each other. As our Methodist brethren accept the two classes of truths, relating to the human and the divine natures of Christ, and heed no upbraiding for inconsistency, so we accept the parallel truths of man's free agency and of sovereign grace, both as to the beginning of the Christian life, and perseverance in it to the end; and we do not undertake to explain how the two things are consistent with each other. When we read the very severe strictures of those great and good men, the Wesleys, against our belief on these points, and wonder that they could not have seen how scriptural and how profitable they are, we perceive something of the depths in the divine wisdom in allowing these mighty men some points of divergence from us, in order that they might become what they have been in England, and elsewhere, a great stimulant force in Christendom. They are, in some respects, the flying artillery in the sacramental host. What denomination can show greater exploits, more versatile service, and larger conquests? Let them differ from us, and go, like Nahum's chariots, through the west, and over the earth; we shall follow them, (where we do not precede them,) and by our diversified influence fill up that which is behind in them, for the elect's sake, which is the Church.

How good it is now to leave these things in which

evangelical Christians differ, and lift our eyes to heaven, as the Methodist Whitefield did in one of his sermons, when he appealed to Abraham by name to know whether he had any Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, or Congregationalists in heaven, and being answered, No, and asking, Whom have you there, the reply was, Christians.

We are not yet in heaven, however, but in a world where we all "see as through a glass darkly." Therefore we must endeavor to serve God, and persuade men, by recommending that form of Christianity which appears to us, respectively, most accordant with scripture; at the same time remembering, that men as good and conscientious as we, who receive the one great essential truth of salvation by faith in Christ, feel persuaded that they also are substantially right in their modes and forms; and we know that God sets the seal of his blessing upon their labors. This should temper our sectarianism. Let us also be magnanimous and forbearing toward any who may assume that they alone, of all protestants, have the true church, and the true ministry, and the true forms of worship, and the sacraments in their purity and validity; and that all other denominations are schismatics, whose duty and safety require them to return at once into the one true fold.

There are maladies which lead some to reason themselves into the belief that they are kings, and queens,

or peers of the realm. The church of God is, in some sense, a hospital, in which we are all under treatment for our errors and follies. We can learn patience and toleration one toward another, as we see how sad is the delusion which makes some think that they only, of all the members of Christ's family, are sitting on his right hand and on his left hand in his kingdom. That sinful woman at the well of Samaria is a type of every prelatical church, which insists that in their mountain we must worship the father. The reproof and instruction which she received from Christ, some, who are, nevertheless, we doubt not, Christians, are slow to understand.

And who are Christians? Christians, according to an Apostolic definition, are "those who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours." If a man wishes to know what he must do to be saved, and goes to a Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, or Congregationalist minister or Christian, they will each tell him, for substance, that which will lead him to pay divine honors to Jesus Christ. If he kneels in prayer with them, they will pray to Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. Let him sing with them, and they will use hymns in accordance with that new song which is sung before the throne. This is what we believe to be meant by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours. It is rendering divine worship to Jesus Christ as the

Redeemer of men. In speaking upon this great theme, I choose to step upon that broad platform where I can stand side by side with those Episcopal, Baptist, and Methodist brethren, who, with all their discrepancies, adopt the language of Paul in the text. But even Paul made proper account of subordinate questions. When they came and asked him whether it was right to eat that which had been laid before an idol, and was then exposed for sale in the market, he did not reply, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified," but he gave suitable answers to such inquiries.

It would be a cause of gratitude to God if we could say that evangelical Christians of different denominations do not contend for their forms of order and worship as their chief concern. Some, however, in all denominations, the Congregational not excepted, hold and urge extreme views, both as to doctrine and order. We may be as bigoted in insisting upon "no forms," as others are who insist upon their forms and order as essential to a standing in the Christian church, and in the Christian ministry. And as to the points of doctrine in which evangelical Christians differ, while we all have our strong preferences, and should not yield what we deem a principle, the dissent of confessedly good men, whom God accepts and honors, should make us charitable and liberal in our feelings, and prevent us from unnecessarily magnify-

ing the things in which we differ. For if there be in us one thing more than another which is offensive to our common Lord and Master, it must be a pretentious and lofty carriage toward other denominations of Christians whom, notwithstanding the signal manner in which God has owned and blessed them, we disfranchise, and then, with a due amount of admonition and warning, notify, that our doors stand open to receive them. Bold pretensions to the only divine patent right in religious ordinances have their effect upon a certain class of minds, and may lead them, by a sort of intimidation, to join another communion; but these men becoming, as they generally do, tenfold more intensely sectarian than those who may have been born in the sect, only help to make the denomination which they infest, Ishmaelitish toward the whole Israel of God.

As to certain doctrinal points on which true Christians differ, let us each be fully persuaded in his own mind and walk according to the light which we enjoy, but it was a shrewd stroke in the author of the Paradise Lost, to say that fallen angels, as one of their occupations, debated the subjects of

> "Fixed fate, free will, fore-knowledge absolute;
> And found no end in wandering mazes lost."

But a thorough training for the work of the ministry pre-supposes a knowledge of the constitution of the

human mind, with which we are to deal; and if one can popularize metaphysics in his preaching, and by his skilful use of moral science, make men feel that he is revealing their consciousness, he having, moreover, the higher qualification — that unction which the Holy Spirit alone imparts, he will, with the blessing of God, be eminently acceptable and useful. But if he makes the theological discrepancies of evangelical denominations needlessly prominent, and uses his acquisitions chiefly to illustrate and enforce his peculiar views, he needs to follow Paul out of the school of Gamaliel, into the school of that Savior whose love to men shed abroad in the heart is better than to "understand all mysteries and all knowledge," and which alone keeps us from becoming "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." As the Apostle gloried in his infirmities, let us, as Congregationalists, glory that we do not often incur the reproach of sectarianism in regard to our denominational order. Some among us feel that this is an infirmity, and that we ought to be aggressive, insist more on our anti-prelatical sentiments, and commend our denominational views more earnestly to the people. But Congregationalism consists so essentially in the absence of what we call human inventions, that it is difficult to make it aggressive. The only way in which we can be aggressive, is, to debate the scripturalness or expediency of the denominational tenets held by other sects. This we can do as

often as they are exalted so as to reflect, or to cast discredit, upon ourselves. If Christian brethren believe that different orders in the ministry and stated forms of worship are not forbidden in the Word of God, we rejoice in their liberty to use them; if they say that these things are enjoined, we still yield them the same liberty of conscience which we claim in maintaining the contrary; but, when they tell us that our ordinances are invalid, and our ministry unscriptural, they remind us of the house of bondage, where our fathers suffered under these same assumptions, and from which God brought them to this good land, and gave them institutions so free as to allow men full liberty of conscience and speech, even to the setting forth of such arrogant claims. May the time never come when we shall need to have open and general conflict with these natural enemies and invaders of Congregational liberty. We have heavy ordnance, and large equipments, as the history of non-conformity shows; but we prefer to see the vine trailing itself over the bastions, and, as in the windows of old castles, the olive tree and myrtles filling up the embrasures which look toward these aggressors. We pray for peace and charity between ourselves and other denominations, and we would not offensively obtrude our peculiarities. I gladly proceed to speak of the more important part of the subject assigned for this discourse, being willing that all should know the rela-

tive importance which we, as Congregationalists, attach to things which are essential, and to those which are not essential, to salvation.

Having disposed, therefore, of the denominational part of my theme, I proceed to speak of TRINITARIANISM, which is the other and more important part of the subject assigned to me.

I begin the doctrinal part of the discourse by saying, first of all, We have a Bible, which we regard and treat as a revelation from heaven. Here we have a fast anchorage ground. Not many years ago, one European nation and another, who had suffered under monarchical laws, cried out for a written constitution, and the battle cry was, "Written Constitution." Men feel safe only when they have such an instrument, ordained and published, as the exposition of their duties, defining the rights and powers of the government, and constituting the basis of judicial acts We have such a written constitution. It is to us the Word of God. We do not select parts of it, and say that these are inspired, and the rest is of no authority. As we do not wish to speculate about the actions and words of Christ, whether this were divine, and this human, but take him as an undivided Christ and Savior, so we do not winnow the Bible, but take it altogether — just as we take Christ in another sense, — as the "Word" of God. We settle the question of its inspiration in this way. We take the Old Testament

Canon, for example, as it existed in the time of Christ, and we say, Jesus Christ came as a teacher of religion. The first thing which a teacher looks to, is the books which, as a teacher, he is to use. When and where did Jesus Christ speak one word of abrogation, emendation, or even criticism, with regard to the Old Testament Scriptures? No such word ever fell from his lips. On the contrary, he quoted them with approbation, and directed his hearers to search the Scriptures, saying, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." He did not seek to disabuse his hearers of their belief that eternal life was to be found in these Scriptures; nor did he point out parts of them which were of less authority than others, nor did he caution his hearers against a too implicit belief of the whole. "Think not," he said, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." He did not bestow qualified praise upon the Old Testament, as being venerable but somewhat antiquated, worthy of respect and love for what it had been, and still useful if judiciously consulted, but soon to be displaced by the New Testament; but, "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle," he declared, "should in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." As there are things in what is called "the law and the prophets," which, upon every interpretation, reach to the end of time, this proverbial expression of the Savior will be

literally fulfilled. The Apostle Peter who, on the mount of transfiguration, heard a voice from heaven attesting the Messiahship of Christ, and saw and heard the preternatural things which then and there transpired, tells us, that, in comparison even with such revelations, "we have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts. — For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." So that we take the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, from the hands of Jesus Christ himself, as the Word of God.

As to the New Testament, if the Apostles were honest men, as we believe them to have been, this is all that we need to satisfy us of their inspiration; for they claim to be inspired, and they suffered and died in attestation of their claim. As to the amount of their inspiration, the Savior promised them that the Holy Spirit should guide them into all truth.

We, therefore, have a Bible which we receive as implicitly as if we, like Moses and the Prophets, should receive direct communications from heaven. We apply the same rules of interpretation to the Bible which we use in interpreting other writings, and having ascertained what is declared, we believe it, whether it be level to our comprehension, or infinitely beyond it

We do not make man and his powers of understanding, the standard and measure by which we decide what the nature of God should be; we do not make our moral sentiments, nor our instincts, nor our relationships, a rule for the divine administration; but we bring all our powers and faculties to the work of interpreting what the Bible teaches; here we use our reason; this is its province. Then, if the Bible teaches us that divine attributes, names, works, and worship, are ascribed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, if all the usual proofs of distinct personal existence demonstrate the equal deity of Three, and if at the same time the Bible asserts, with equal clearness, that there is but one God, we believe these two truths — that there is one God, and that there is a threefold distinction in his nature.

Our predisposition as inquirers in common with all men, would lead us not to adopt this mystery respecting the Godhead, this inexplicable enigma, preferring naturally to receive things which lay the smallest tax on faith. But we remember the reply of the good bishop to the man who said that he had resolved not to believe anything which he could not understand. The bishop said, "Your creed, then, will be the shortest of any which I ever knew."

All the proofs which are usually adduced to show that Christ asserted his inferiority to the Father, confirm and illustrate our belief that the Savior, having

two distinct natures in one person, said things which could be true of only one nature. There is, in our view, as much, and the same, logical proof that Christ was not a man, as that he was not divine; and we might ask, Why not doubt and deny that he had a human nature, when we hear him say, "Before Abraham was, I am"? "And no man hath ascended up into heaven, but he which came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?" "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made," thus making him identical with Him who "in the beginning created the heavens and the earth," and who said, "Let there be light; and there was light." Instead of setting aside such proofs of Christ's deity, we might, with equal reason, say that Christ's human nature was a fiction, adopting something like the theory of the Docetœ, a sect to whom John refers in the first verses of his first epistle, and who derived their name from a Greek word, signifying *to seem*, or to appear, because they taught that Christ had only acted and suffered in appearance. We hold to the coëxistence in Christ of two natures, without mixture or confusion, and therefore, necessarily, to a double consciousness; and we believe in his dependence and limited knowledge, as we do in his hunger and thirst, his weariness, his prayers, his sorrows, his friendships, his agony

of mind and body. The same lips uttered words dictated by these things, as well as those which proceeded from his remembrance of "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." If we are told that he may have been preëxistent, and yet not be divine, we say, "Every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God." The Most High, in his controversy with idolaters in the Old Testament, makes this the incontrovertible proof of his Godhead, that he alone made the heavens and the earth:—"that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;"* thus emphatically excluding the idea of delegated power in the work of creation. Moreover, this mysterious being declares that he is to sit as Judge with all the human race before him, and that he will separate them one from another, and pronounce the final sentence upon them.

It is a greater tax on our faith to believe that a creature does this, that a creature "made all things," and that "by him do all things consist," than that the "Word was with God, and the Word was God." We can agree to consider this subject as but imperfectly revealed; but to say that the divine attributes of Omnipotence and Omniscience can be delegated to a creature, is far more of a stumbling-block to us. This is not above reason, but contrary to reason; but when

* Isaiah xliv. 24. Job ix. 8, etc.

the Bible asserts that "the Word was with God, and the Word was God," this belongs to a region of truths far above us, and which we have never penetrated, viz: the mode of the divine existence.

If Christ made all things, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, if all things were created by him, or for him, he is our Maker. But our Maker is surely our God; and therefore we give divine worship to Christ.

But we find another still to whom divine attributes are attributed, viz., The Holy Ghost. The only sin which is unpardonable is blasphemy against Him. If He be merely divine influence, we do not know, and man cannot define, what the unpardonable sin is; therefore it cannot be committed; for where there is no law, there is no transgression. We are free to say that before we believed in the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, we had no intelligible idea of the unpardonable sin. Now we can understand it. He is a person. He is a divine person. He is the great administrator in the kingdom of grace, applying the work of Christ to the hearts of men, having intercourse with them for this purpose. He who deliberately speaks words of contumely against this Sacred Person, sins against the last and most affecting effort of remedial mercy; and not only by the state of mind which led him to do it, has he placed himself beyond hope of recovery, but he falls under a judicial act of con-

demnation. To say that we may blaspheme the Father and the Son, and be forgiven, but if we blaspheme some influence of either of them, we cannot be forgiven, does greater violence to our understandings than to receive that which we deem the evidences of the personal existence and deity of the Holy Spirit.

That he is a person, we moreover learn from the Savior's words, in which he tells his disciples that if he himself should not go away, the Comforter would not come unto them. If the Holy Spirit is merely divine influence, how the Savior's being in the world should keep divine influence out of it, especially as Christ is the light of the world, we are at a loss to understand. But if the Holy Spirit be a divine person, having an equal share with Christ in the work of redemption, and having a special office assigned to him, viz., to convince and convert men, as the Savior's office was to suffer and die for sin, we can see why the Savior should depart and give place to him. But who is this that is capable of being a successor to Christ? Who can finish such a work as that which the Redeemer began? Who is it that is competent to move upon the heart of every human being, influence his will, and transform him into the image of God?

Baptism is administered in his name, equally with that of the Father and of the Son. We are not baptised in the name of God, and of the Messiah, and of divine influences; and the apostolic benediction is not so

expressed. When we read that "Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John, into a mountain apart," we do not hesitate to believe in three persons. We cannot believe that the great seal of the Christian religion, Baptism, and the Christian Benediction associate the name of a created being, and of an attribute, with the name of God. We hear the Holy Ghost speaking: "Separate *me* Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto *I* have appointed them." He is represented as the author of the Jewish ritual: "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." It is related as remarkable that certain of John's disciples had not heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. But they could not have been baptised by John and not have known that there was such a thing as "divine influence," and therefore this could not have been all which was signified by the name, "Holy Ghost," in that connection.

So we come to the conclusion that there are Three to whom divine attributes, names, works, and worship, are ascribed, and we are left to choose whether to believe that there are Three Gods, or that the One God exists with a three-fold distinction in his nature. For, to set aside all the plain proofs that supreme deity is ascribed to Three, on the ground that we dread the inference which must follow, is to make ourselves like the cotemporaries of Galileo who would not look through his telescope, lest their discoveries should con-

found their theories. Believing that there is but One God, we adopt the belief forced upon us by our interpretation of Scripture, that the One God has a plural nature. We believe in the Divine Unity, in opposition to the belief that there are more Gods than one; so that "the doctrine of the Trinity" is a form of stating the collected facts concerning the mode of the divine existence.

But "the word Trinity is not in the Bible," and it has been said, "If the very words which are necessary to express the doctrine are not in the scriptures, how can we suppose the doctrine itself to be there?"

The expressions, "Omniscience," "Unity of God," "Sacrament," and many other conventional terms are not in the Bible. The word, Trinity, is no more necessary to the doctrine itself than the expression, "communion of saints", is necessary to the existence of Christian fellowship. These terms prevent circumlocution, and are merely convenient.

"But Christ said, 'My Father is greater than I.'" None but a being who, in some sense, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," would be so presumptuous as thus to make a comparison of himself with the Most High. Imagine Moses saying to the children of Israel as he came down from the mount, or even Gabriel saying to Mary, "My Father is greater than I." We can free ourselves from the feeling that there is assumption in those words of Jesus, or that

He forgot himself, or was unduly elated, or used an expression which, though seemingly in deprecation of too great reverence for himself, was really irreverent, only by believing that his disciples were liable to forget, amidst the impressions which his power and love had made on their hearts, that he was acting in a subordinate capacity, and that they needed to feel that their Savior's personal presence was not the greatest and best thing for them; that the Father was engaged in the work of redemption and acted as its head, and that the Holy Spirit also must come and do his part of the divine work. By such an interpretation alone can we see even a common reverence for God, and an ordinary sense of propriety, (with submission be it spoken,) in the words, "My Father is greater than I." Acting, even in His complex nature, in a subordinate capacity, the words are natural and appropriate; but if he were a mere man, no wonder that some call him fallible, if he could for one moment have compared himself with the Infinite One.

We read, "No man knoweth who the Son is but the Father; and no man knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." Now as we do know in some sense of the term, and according to the measure of the human understanding, who God is, so we may know many things which are revealed concerning Christ; but, we learn from this passage that there are mysteries in

Christ's nature which are not fathomed, except by the Father; they are compared to the mysteries in the nature of the Father. Equally astonishing, Christ represents himself as alone capable of knowing the Father.

Such is the mystery, concerning which Paul prayed for "as many as had not seen his face in the flesh," "that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ."

It is interesting to know that those denominations who believe in the plenary inspiration of the Bible as a revelation from God, find in it the doctrine of a threefold personal distinction in the Godhead. And those denominations who reject the plenary inspiration of the Bible, do not find that doctrine there. I mention this as a coincidence worthy of notice. The two things, plenary inspiration of the Word of God, and the Deity of Christ, usually stand or fall together.

There are some practical views of this subject which will be considered in their place. I proceed now to speak of Future Retribution.

We bow implicitly to the disclosures of the Bible, as we find that the punishment of the wicked is to be without end. We cannot tell, of ourselves, what sin deserves. We listen, implicitly, to the revelation of the Most High on that subject. We believe in endless future punishment, not because of natural timidi-

ty, or superstitious fear, nor because our teachers so instruct us. We have an average share of intelligence and cultivation, are no better and no worse than our neighbors. We are as capable by nature of defying the Almighty, we are as bold to offend him, and to rush on the thick bosses of his buckler, as other sinners. Some think that we must have direful views of God to believe in endless future punishment, that he must seem to us a tyrant, a "Draco, whose laws were written with blood", whereas to them God appears merciful and benign. But the infinite love of God is one of the strongest considerations in our minds with regard to future punishment; for to us that love finds its highest manifestation in the gift of a Savior, to make propitiation for our sins. In our ransom we see our ruin. The love of Christ, leading to his sufferings and death for sin, do more than anything else to persuade us that the wages of sin is death; that there is a loss of the soul which nothing can prevent but the sacrifice on Calvary. That such a sacrifice should be made, by the incarnation and the expiatory offering of the Word who was with God and was God, that the Holy Spirit should come to apply it in the hearts of men, a ministry of reconciliation be appointed, whose great commission is to say, "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God;" and then that men having rejected, or which is equivalent, having

neglected, this Savior, should go to be chastised and disciplined out of their sins, and that, too, notwithstanding all our sufferings, mingled with mercy, here, and all the warnings and threatenings of the Bible, and thus reach heaven by their own sufferings, is to make the love of God a failure, and punishment to be the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. That the great propitiation for sin should thus come to nought, and prison discipline prove the grand instrument of salvation, excites the question why this should not have been resorted to at first, as the most natural, and certainly as, in the view of some it will prove, the most effectual way of reformation. That the infinite love of God will thus be made superfluous, and that any of our race will reach heaven through the discipline of hell, to reflect on its enormous woes as the means of their deliverance, making the cross of Christ of none effect, is as contrary to our apprehension of what is suitable and reasonable as it is to the word of God. So that if any come to us and say, "God is love, and therefore he will not punish forever," we say, "Herein is love," pointing them to the cross; we take our place there, and, knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men. Our friends who differ from us think that a belief in the eternity of future punishment must make us unhappy. They forget that the idea of future punishment is associated in our minds with redemption from it, that salvation is the burden

of our preaching, that we go to the vilest of men, following even the felon to the scaffold, and thus to the last hour of every sinner's life we say, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him."

As to the heathen, we shall either find them in heaven, or be satisfied with the reason why they are not there. In the meantime, we are obeying the last command of the ascending Savior with the reason annexed, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

We find in the Bible, therefore, that every one who fails to accept pardon through faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God, will have no probation after death. The Son of God, the Word made flesh, under the name of Jesus, offers up himself, the presence of the divine nature in his person giving infinite worth and efficacy to his sacrifice. This is an atonement for sin, stated in this most simple way: "Christ died for us;" "to give his life a ransom for many;" "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;" "he died for all;" "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," and other expressions in great number and variety. The death of Christ is proposed to men as the ground on which God can be just, and justify

him that believeth in Jesus. Repentance and the remission of sins are to be preached in his name among all nations. We do not understand why an atonement like this was made, rather than any other; we find it set forth, and urged upon us, as that alone which delivers us from the wrath to come. And we cannot see why it is unjust, or cruel, that we, for whom such infinite condescension and such a sacrifice took place, should, upon refusing to accept it, suffer such consequences as God in his wisdom shall appoint. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

There is far more prominence given to love than to fear in our system of faith. Its great central truth is, love to the guilty. But he has no experience or observation who does not know that in every form of government, private or public, fear is an important and indispensable element; it has its place; that place is not in precedence of everything else, for then we infer despotism in the government. But God appeals to the principle of fear in governing us, and fear quickens love and obedience even in the purest relations of life. The great inducements to faith in Christ which God himself presents, are addressed to our love of happiness and to our fears of misery, and he who proposes to leave out fear in religion is as unscriptural as he is forgetful of our natural instincts.

While the love of God, in the gift of a Savior, sheds its light and glory over the whole system of revealed truth, we believe that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is also the God of the Old Testament, with all that is there related of him as vindictive and implacable toward the incorrigibly wicked. There has been no change in the divine character since the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the extirpation of the Cananites. "Our God is a consuming fire." "It is" still "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The Savior, himself, is all which the Old Testament represents God to be, in his final treatment of wicked men. "For the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We believe that no language can describe, no mind can conceive the punishment which sin deserves, and which awaits us if we reject the Gospel, and refuse to repent. Some of President Edwards' well-known sermons express our general views upon this subject; but neither they, nor any other descriptions, do justice to the dread reality. To one who was finding fault with the terrible language in some of Richard Baxter's works on this theme, a good man said, "One word of damnation from the lips of Christ is more than a thousand of Mr. Baxter's." We believe that

God will punish sin in a way corresponding to the infinite wonders of his love and grace in redemption; and that as there are said to be depths in the ocean corresponding to the height of mountains, so they who neglect Christ and continue in sin, will endure a punishment corresponding to the greatness of the salvation which was provided for them. We believe that the justice of God will be as clearly and fully illustrated as his love, and that the two will lay a foundation for the confidence and joy of the holy universe, in whose government the endless punishment of sin will hold an important place. Let it be fully understood, that our belief in the future, endless punishment of all who reject salvation by Christ is one important element in our love and gratitude to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, for the stupendous work of redemption, and that it is the occasion of love and zeal, which should be more by a hundred fold, for the souls of our fellow men.

We find that the Bible has, in all ages of the world, made certain impressions on the vast majority of its readers; the cultivated, the gentle, the humane, the benevolent, the learned as well as the unlearned; and we are accustomed to suppose that if God has given a revelation to man, its meaning would lie on its surface, as we find is the case in all written communications which are intended to be understood; so that the sense which is generally received from age to age

by common readers of the Bible, is and must be true. Now we perceive that mankind at large, who receive the Bible implicitly as the word of God, find there that God will punish the incorrigibly wicked without end. We say, Who invented this terrible truth? It is not agreeable to our natural feelings. Our reason would not have suggested it. Were it a palpable error, time, which has reformed many errors and exploded others, surely would have consigned this long ago to the moles and the bats, if it had no foundation in the Bible. Yet there were never so many who believed it as at the present day; and we are therefore confirmed in the belief derived from the impressions which the Bible makes upon us, that there is no forgiveness after death. These things I mention chiefly to illustrate the manner in which evangelical Christians of all denominations receive and interpret the word of God. The mode of the divine existence, and the future eternal punishment of the wicked, are two things which make large demands on faith. We, therefore, believe, without comprehending the subjects of our faith, in these two mysteries, as we all do with regard to the union of soul and body, the final resurrection, and the ultimate truths in the various departments of nature.

If one says here, How can three be one and one three? we say, that God cannot, of course, be three in the same sense in which he is one, nor is he one in the

same sense in which he is three. But we are not so presumptuous as to sit as teachers to our fellow mortals, with regard to that of which, like them, we know nothing. The only source from which we can derive knowledge concerning God, is equally in their possession as in ours; and while we disclaim any superiority to them, they may not properly reproach us with believing absurdities, or cleaving to exploded errors. There are immeasurably less difficulties with us in believing that Christ and the Holy Spirit are divine, than in the opposite theory; and believing in their divinity, the doctrine of the Trinity is the only relief from believing in three Gods. If it be replied, that this is impossible in the nature of things, we might be satisfied to make the reply which our late distinguished statesman and fellow citizen made to a friend who met him at the door of an Episcopal church, and rallied him on worshiping at a place where the doctrine of three in one was inculcated. The reply was, "Neither you nor I understand the arithmetic of heaven."*

* Having used this anecdote after much hesitation, and apprehending that it might seem like resorting to a great name among men for support to divine truth, I find it necessary, for certain reasons, to go farther, and add the following; — which, however, I still would not do, if the point were merely the assent of any distinguished man to a controverted doctrine of the Bible.

Since this sermon was preached, I have obtained authentic information respecting this anecdote. A distinguished clergyman writes to me, in answer to my inquiry, as follows: —

The greatest intellect is as infantile in its capacity to understand the "great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," as a child, and therefore the mystery owes no man any obligation for acceding to it; nor can great names confirm or impeach it. I quote this remark, therefore, only to say, in accordance with it, that it becomes us not to pronounce confidently as to the impossibility of there being a threefold distinction in the one God. But I will endeavor soon to commend the subject to your approbation, and not leave it as a cold and barren abstraction.

We are inquired of whether a man would punish his child forever, and whether the human mind does not revolt from the idea of endless misery, and whether we have read the Evangelical Baptist John Foster's objections to Endless Punishment. We had read the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew before we read Mr. Foster's views, and we have read that chapter since, with other passages of the Savior's discourses which relate to future retributions. We feel ourselves to be the persons to whom, in common with our fellow sin-

"Dining with Mr. Webster two months before his death, I remarked to him that I had been informed of an event which I wished him to contradict, modify, or confirm. The statement was, that a gentleman met him one day as he was coming out of an Episcopal church, and accosted him thus: 'Then you attend that church?' 'Sometimes.' 'So you believe that three and one are the same thing?' 'I believe, Sir,' said Mr. Webster, 'that neither you nor I understand the arithmetic of heaven.' — 'You have it,' said Mr. Webster [to my informant,] 'as it occurred.'"

ners, these warnings of future endless retribution are addressed; and we more than question the propriety of our sitting in judgment on the penalties threatened against our transgressions. The eternity of future punishment is no more agreeable and no more intelligible to us than to others. But we prefer that God should be law-giver and judge, remembering that transgressors, when they suffer the penalty of their sins, are apt to feel that it violates their sense of propriety, and goes against many of their instinctive feelings; for they feel sure that they never would treat a child as the law treats them. We find that a parent may do things in his government and discipline which the teacher of a school cannot safely adopt; that the teacher of a school can act on some principles which are not practicable in the government of a man-of-war, an army, a city, or a nation; in a word, that as the sphere of authority widens, analogies sought between one and another of them, fail. We forbear, therefore, to make our moral sentiments the source of information concerning God and his government, but we would rather bring them to the word of God for correction and instruction, accepting the great Protestant maxim that the Scriptures are the only and the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. So long, therefore, as we receive the Bible as an authoritative standard of truth, we are compelled to receive the doctrine of future endless retribution, as the vast majority of devout persons have received it in all ages of the world.

Injustice would be done to the system of Evangelical belief, if I should rest here, and leave the impression that our faith is a heartless assent to an all-constraining power, requiring blind submission to its disclosures. While some of the principal doctrines of our faith are above reason, I shall be happy to show that not only are they not against reason, but being accepted as matters of pure revelation, they commend themselves to our consciences and hearts. This system stimulates and develops the powers of the human mind, and brings forth all the best affections of the human soul.

Our religion does not begin with requiring us to believe that three can be one and one three, or that a part of mankind will suffer without end for their sins. The way in which we have generally arrived at a full and settled persuasion concerning our doctrine is, by a discovery of the infinite love of God to us in the way of salvation, so that we are led to say with the Apostle John, "And we have known and believed the love which God hath toward us." The love of God is the sun in our system of truth. If others rejoice in God as their heavenly father, and celebrate his love as the great theme of religion, we have proofs and illustrations of that love which make our praises surpass theirs. It reminds us of the Oratorio of the Messiah compared with Pope's Universal Prayer. Our great theme is, "For God so loved the world that he gave

his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We do not teach, do not believe, that God was implacable towards us, and that the Son of God interposed and prevailed upon him to accept Him as a substitute for us; but, on the contrary, that redemption began with the Father as well as with the Son; that it was a plan of infinite mercy to save sinners, and not an agreement to be appeased and satisfied. Our hymn writers and orators dramatize the work of redemption, and say many things with a poetic license in a fervent state of mind, which an ordinary degree of literary discernment and candor, nevertheless, finds it easy to distinguish from a strictly accurate theological statement.

An individual is made to feel that all is not right between himself and God. It is not so much that he dreads future punishment, though he has good warrant, both in reason and in Scripture, for being moved with fear to prepare an ark, to the saving of his house; but he is dissatisfied with himself; he wishes to have a sense of reconciliation and peace with God.

He goes to an evangelical minister and tells him his tale of sorrow. Among other things, he says, "I was educated in an entire unbelief of your faith; was always taught that 'the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in the Bible'; that repentance is sufficient for

salvation; but I am not satisfied. What must I do to be saved?"

No one who has himself experienced the power of religion, would begin by teaching this enquirer the doctrine of the Trinity. He would rather direct him to dismiss his troubled thoughts about that mystery, and he would say to him, My friend, you need that which God has appointed for you, namely, some other righteousness than your own, as the ground of pardon and acceptance with God. You are a sinner, and are under condemnation for your sins; by nature a child of wrath, even as others. But God has so loved you, even in your rebellion and ill desert, as to give the Savior to be, by his sufferings and death, a substitute for your punishment. He becomes your righteousness, or, the ground and reason of your deliverance from condemnation. The only condition required of you is, that you believe with your heart, and accept, this offered way of being pardoned and reconciled to God. Consider such words as these: Christ "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." Then the way to avail yourself of this righteousness is declared in such words as these: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through

our Lord Jesus Christ." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "He that believeth shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." You need, first of all, to be forgiven; you must apply for pardon to Him who can be just and justify him that believeth in Jesus; not him that merely repenteth—but "him that believeth in Jesus." The inquirer, then, believes that the way which God has ordained for sinners to be reconciled to him is through the sufferings and death of the Savior, constituting an equivalent for the punishment of the sins of the whole world. All that the Bible says about the Savior's death, his blood, his cross, all the types in the sacrifices, and the names of Christ fulfilling them, "Lamb of God," "High Priest," "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," satisfy him that the atoning death of Christ is the appointed ground of acceptance with God. He then sees, more than ever, what a sinner he is, and how great the enormity of sin must be to have required such a sacrifice; and the love of God toward him, and the thought of Christ as dying for him, fills him with true sorrow for his sins such as he never felt before; for repentance is the sorrow of love; we never repent toward any one till some feeling of interest in him or love toward him, touches the heart. Nothing has this effect compared with the thought of Christ dying for our sins. Now the inquirer accepts Christ as he finds him to be offered

in the gospel, and doing so there takes place in him at the time, that change, by the Holy Spirit, of which Christ spoke to Nicodemus, when he said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." But his act of believing was itself the work of the Holy Spirit; "for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." This change is that regeneration by which we have spiritual perceptions, and feelings, and tastes; and he that experiences it, we say, will certainly persevere to the end and be saved. "Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ." It is that part of redemption which the Holy Spirit performs in our souls as a consequence of the atonement by Christ; "in whom after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." In our mental philosophy, in the whole range of human experience, we never find anything to be compared with the knowledge of ourselves, the self control, the disclosure of new objects of spiritual affection and pursuit, the inward peace and satisfaction, which flow from this change which is connected with the one act of saving faith in the Redeemer. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

A friend who cannot understand how three can be one

and one three, knowing that this new convert formerly had great perplexity on that subject, now inquires of him how he has settled that problem. I have not settled it, he says. All that I know is, that I have seen myself to be a lost, perishing sinner, in need of other righteousness than my own. I have found in Christ Jesus an Almighty Savior. I worship him, I have committed my soul to him; and yet I can no more understand the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, than I could before. I take the revealed facts concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and I believe them, and am willing to believe concerning the unsearchable God anything which he is pleased to reveal; and I do not perplex myself with attempts at explanation.

But one inquires whether we may not trust in the Savior's sufferings and death for sin, and still not believe in his supreme deity. May not God have ap pointed his sufferings for our redemption, even if he be only a super-angelic being?

It has seemed to us that we have sometimes met those who thus received Christ as a Savior, and who, while they could not, or, on account of their religious instruction, had not received Christ in his divine nature, nevertheless relied upon his mediation, and prayed to him. All this, it is easy to see, is theologically inconsistent, for it is rendering worship to a crea-

ture. To say that saving faith may not be found in connection with such inadvertency and imperfect knowledge, would be to limit the grace of the Holy Spirit, and we might thereby break some bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax. But exceptional cases form no rule of duty; we, who are capable of understanding how impossible, in the nature of things, it is, for a creature to atone for sin, must, if we accept that atonement, refer it to a divine nature in Christ giving infinite worth and efficacy to his sufferings and death.

We would affectionately say to those who are greatly troubled by the doctrine of the Trinity, and who aver, with the utmost sincerity, that they would believe it if satisfied that the Bible disclosed it,—that we seldom, if ever, find that any arrive at a belief in it by speculating about it, by reading books on the subject, by discussions with their friends, or through religious controversies. The doctrine of the Trinity is, by itself, of no practical value, any more than it is to know whether there be six, or seven stars in the Pleiades. The doctrine of the Trinity is important only as systematizing for us the previously ascertained truths of the Supreme Deity of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. It is a conclusion, resulting from things which are gathered independently of any theory.

Some wonder why the doctrine should seem so mysterious, and even absurd, to them, when so many

whom they respect and love, believe it. An able writer undertakes to explain why the Epistle to the Romans is usually regarded as very difficult. His explanation is applicable to our subject. He says, "Where there is wanting, in the reader's own life, an experience analogous to that of the Apostle, it is utterly unintelligible."* We must feel our personal need of that which led to the disclosure of the mystery in the Godhead, that is to say, the Redemption which is by Christ; then we receive the mystery. Abundant illustrations of this are to be found among us in those who once rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, but who are now members of our Evangelical churches.

The way, therefore, to arrive at a belief in the Trinity is, not by direct efforts to reconcile the seemingly contradictory propositions which it involves, but, to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" to comply with the directions of the Bible, which point to the sufferings and death of Christ as the only way of salvation; and thus, having received the pardon of sin through his blood, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, we come to believe in the deity of Christ, and of the Spirit; and that which we call the Doctrine of the Trinity supervenes in our belief as a necessary consequence, and as the only way of escaping from the belief that there are more Gods than one.

* Olshausen's Commentary on the New Testament, III., 463.

The theory of our evangelical faith, all must admit, is most sublime. Every one who considers it abstractly, if he be impartial, must say, There is at least one thing in it which it is most desirable should be true. The human mind, from the beginning, has been craving visible manifestations of the Godhead, something to satisfy it that God, a Spirit, is near to us, interested in human affairs, and also to know his feelings and wishes with regard to us. Hence, the various theories of incarnation, and all the numberless forms of idolatry, showing the desire in the human mind for the manifestation of God. Now, if God so exists, that in one of the mysterious distinctions of his essential being he will take man's nature into union with his own, being born of a woman, and passing through all the conditions of human life, then make expiation for our sins, and become our Redeemer and Savior, — who will not say, Could this be possible, what more is there to be desired? Now, this is our faith. The Word made flesh lies in the manger at Bethlehem, passes through all the stages of human life, bears our griefs, and carries our sorrows, is tempted in all points as we are, enters into all our feelings, is our forerunner through all the dark passages of life, while we know that "he is before all things and by him do all things consist," that "all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that is made." I can call him my elder brother, and in the

next breath my God; now tell the man of sorrows my trouble, and, in a moment after, pray him, as my final Judge, to be my advocate at the world's last session. Angels, authorities and powers are subject unto him, who nevertheless says to every child of man, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him and he with me." Though He will come at the end of the world with all his holy angels, he says of every believer, "And I will raise him up at the last day." The believer says of him, "Who loved me and gave himself for me." "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

We also pray to the Holy Spirit, in whose name we were baptized, by whom we were convinced of sin and led to Christ, and whose relation to us is specially set forth by the terms, "communion" and "fellowship." We prefer particular wants to Him, ask special blessings of Him, receive spiritual mercies from Him; in short, he is to us, as the Savior promised, "the Comforter," who is to abide with us forever. And while the Son and the Holy Spirit thus occupy most endeared relations to us, the Father becomes not merely Deity, but as his own peculiar name indicates, our Father; a name which, in such a world as this, has the more particular significance and sweetness as ex-

pressing a relationship to us,—not merely that of God, but of Father,—as the Savior and the Comforter each have their relations to us in the work of redemption.

One word of explanation may be useful here as a relief to inquiring minds. We find that the Father is uniformly called God. We suppose that it is the divine arrangement in the work of human redemption that the idea and the name of God shall prominently associate themselves in the minds of men, with the Father, as distinguished from the Son, and the Holy Spirit,—these holding subordinate offices in the great plan. Thus associating the idea and name of God specially with the Father, we are saved the necessity of trying to combine the Three in our thoughts, so as to make them One to our conceptions. We therefore unhesitatingly address the Father as *God*, He being ordinarily so designated in the New Testament. And yet we remember that there is One who "was in the beginning with God, and was God," and One also who is connected with them both in acts of divine worship; and, moreover, that the word *Father* is often used to interpret the word *God*, in cases where it would be utterly superfluous, if the Father alone were divine.

There is no system which gives us such views of the dignity of human nature as our evangelical system. It represents human nature as capable of union with the divine nature, in the person of Jesus Christ. Our na-

ture can think, speak, act, and exist through eternity, in personal union with the "Word who was God." What dignity is there in any view of man, to be compared with this? It holds out to every human being the boundless career of glory which is before our nature, if we are saved, seeing that it is capable of being possessed forever by One "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Surely, if, as some say, it costs us painful efforts, (as it does not when convinced of our guilt and our need of a divine Savior,) to believe in the supreme deity of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, and so in a Trinity, we are recompensed when we see our nature in such personal, nay, bodily union with the Divine Word. It opens to the heart of the believer such views of his relation to his God, draws him into such union and communion with Him, and so persuades him, as nothing else can, of identification with his divine Redeemer, that the whole circle of natural and revealed truth furnishes no such sources of pleasure. So that no system is to be compared, as a source of happiness, too, with that which makes Jesus Christ the object of divine worship and supreme love. Witness the hymns which it has produced, surpassing all other lyrics in rapturous thoughts and expressions. The Congregational Watts has to-day filled many temples of God, wherever the English language is spoken, with his glowing strains. Notice how his hymns begin

"Behold the glories of the Lamb
Amidst his father's throne;
Prepare new honors for his name,
And songs before unknown.

Thou hast redeemed our souls with blood,
Hast set the prisoners free;
Hast made us kings and priests to God,
And we shall reign with thee."

The Methodist, Charles Wesley, almost his rival, cries:

"He left his father's throne above,
So free, so infinite his grace;
Emptied himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me."

The Baptist Bunyan comes singing through the world, in every language, to every pilgrim heavenward; and, without telling us how he was baptized, or how we must be, lifts up his voice, and sings:

"Blest Cross! blest Sepulchre! blest, rather be
The Man who there was put to shame for me."

And the Episcopal Heber leads great Missionary assemblies everywhere, as they sing:

"Waft, waft ye winds his story, ——
Till o'er our ransomed nature
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator
Returns in bliss to reign."

Nothing, therefore, is further from the truth than to call evangelical religion "a gloomy system." On the contrary, to all who enter into the full spirit of the system, it is a perfect rapture. Sin and death are gloomy; redemption from them is not so. If we believe all which the Bible and our own consciousness and observation teach us respecting the entire natural alienation of man from God, and his need of divine help, we are not justly chargeable with "gloomy views" for discerning and promulgating the truths relating to human nature and redemption. A man who should tell newly-discovered islanders, when foreign people begin to visit their shores, of the disease called the small pox, and, setting forth its horrors, should urge vaccination, might perhaps be charged by some with taking "gloomy views" of human life; but with how much reason?

Not only does our faith lead us, with our fellow citizens generally, to bless the poor and afflicted at home; — it makes the world of mankind, for which Christ died, to be our neighbors; — and having a gospel which is for the barbarian as well as for the Jew, for the wise and the unwise, we seek to fulfil the last command of Christ, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." This was the original character of the gospel — it was essentially a self-propagating system; and we may be sure, therefore, that they who have the true gospel will

spread it to the ends of the earth. It is this system which has made the barbarous Sandwich Islanders an independent nation, converted South Sea cannibals and Greenlanders, the Burmese, and Hottentots; and has sent to heaven representatives from every nation and tongue, as fruits of its love and zeal.

As an illustration of the way in which our belief in the Divine Redeemer helps the human mind in its thoughts and feelings about the Deity, I will speak of one who was distressed at the thought of an eternal, self-existent God; — and who, at times, is not visited with such thoughts? "How came He?" said the inquirer. "What made it possible for Him to be? Everything else had a beginning; how could He exist always, with no origin, no cause?" Then he would reprove himself for irreverence or presumption; still these thoughts would return. One day, having been much troubled on the subject, he said to himself, "I am sure of one thing, and that is, that Jesus Christ is what the New Testament describes. I believe in his preëxistence, his birth, his miracles, his omnipresence, his omnipotence; that he redeemed me and will save me. The Bible tells me, 'All things were made by him.' He who made me is my God. Whoever else may be God, he is God to me; and I will worship him as my God, and let go all my troubled thoughts about the infinite and eternal Deity." So he believed in the

Divine Savior, and prayed to him, and committed the keeping of his soul to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator, till at last his mind was perfectly at rest; and whenever the thought of the past eternity of God began to oppress him, he fled to the manger at Bethlehem, and to Bethany, and to Gethsemane, and to Calvary, and Olivet, saying to his Savior:

"Rock of Ages! cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

This is one practical illustration of the design in the great mystery of godliness — God manifest in the flesh. It is as when a vine-dresser adds a lower rail to the trellis, and helps the young tendrils as they reach after something to sustain them. The Father will not be jealous if we thus receive Christ as Him "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Other men besides this friend of whom I speak, have similar experiences with regard to the incomprehensible Deity. Dr. Watts tells us,

"Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find."

And when he looks within the vail, he says, and Christians of every name on earth respond,

"There I behold with sweet delight,
The Sacred Three in One;
And strong affections fix my sight,
On God's incarnate Son."

One great and good object will be effected by the present course of lectures, if it be established in our minds that the Evangelical sects do not differ as to the truths which are essential to salvation. On that subject they are a unit. But we are all weak and sinful, and we sometimes unduly magnify our party distinctions, and lose sight of that great salvation which is independent of forms and names. We also are tempted to engage in speculations. We speculate, even, about the nature of the atonement, and other things, when we should all do better to preach and teach the simple truths of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, and the necessity of the new birth, and warn men of their danger as sinners, and point them to Christ. We need to ask pardon of God and our fellow men, that sectarian zeal should ever chill our love to one another, and prevent us from exalting the things in which we agree, and keeping those things in which we differ in their proper place. We trust that the present effort will lead us all to determine afresh not to know anything but Christ and him crucified; and in our endeavors to set forth the peculiarities of our respective systems, to do it with Christian love and charity, abstaining from everything like sarcasm, and ridicule, or reflecting upon the understanding or the motives of others, but seeking to convince and persuade each other, if we may; but, above all things,

combining to make Christ and his salvation the Alpha and the Omega of our ministrations.

There are some who have not yet united themselves to any evangelical denomination, who, nevertheless, may secretly have embraced the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. Instead of saying, "Forbid them, because they follow not with us," we say, in the words of Jesus, "Forbid them not, for he that is not against us is on our part." We shall none of us be saved or lost, merely for belonging, or not belonging, to any particular denomination. But this is true, that no one can experimentally accept the truths of the Savior's supreme deity, and of his sacrifice for sin, and yet leave the Christian community long in doubt where he stands. To worship Christ as God, and to believe in deliverance from sin and eternal misery through Him, so affects the mind that, like the Apostles, we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. "And being let go, they went to their own company." This is a law of our nature. We associate with those of our own kind; in politics we may belong to no party, but in religion we show the state of our hearts quickly by our religious associations. Jesus Christ has a definite character. He is one thing or another. He is deity, or he is a creature, between whom, if he be a creature, however exalted, and deity, there is an infinite distance. If one would fly ninety-six mil-

lions of miles to the sun, it would make but little difference whether he started from the plain or from the Himalaya Mountains. The difference between the most exalted creature and God is as really infinite as between us and God. The most exalted creature is only a creature. Some who are disposed to walk after the evangelical faith, stumble at the great stumbling block of Christ crucified. They find it hard to place the Savior on the throne, but prefer to leave him very far up in the regions of uncertainty. For such friends we sometimes think that the New Testament ends with that passage concerning Christ, in the first chapter of the Acts, "And a cloud received him out of their sight."

The Apostles were not mystics; they left no man in doubt as to their opinions concerning Christ; the churches had no occasion to debate whether one and another of them was sound as to his views of Him for whom they had suffered the loss of all things. It was not the Apostles' doctrine that there are many ways to heaven, as there are many railroads leading to a great city from opposite points, but all terminating in the same city. They insisted that there was but one way to be saved.

There is, therefore, a test of truth which we can easily remember and apply in hearing the preachers of different denominations, and in deciding whom to believe.

While it does not follow that every system declaring a belief in itself to be essential to salvation, is, for that reason, the truth of God, we find this to be true, that Christ and the apostles declared that a belief in the gospel was necessary in order to be saved. Hence we conclude, that if a man professes to preach the gospel to us, and does not insist that there is something in his system which we must believe, or perish, he does not preach Christ's gospel. If he says, All systems have some good in them and you must cull for yourself, only be sincere;

> "For forms of faith, let senseless zealots fight,
> He can't be wrong whose life is in the right;"

and it is bigotry for me to say that you must believe this which I preach to you, or perish; — if he speaks thus, all men, even the worst, are straightway warranted in saying to him, as the evil spirits, in Paul's time, had the discernment to say to certain false teachers, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" We require him to say to us, if he professes to preach the gospel, There are things in my system which you may receive or reject, and though I consider them to be scriptural, and good, and profitable unto men, you may innocently follow me, or my neighbor, who differs from me in these things. There are, nevertheless, some things in my system which you must believe; and I have no authority to say that you will be saved

unless you do. My everlasting all I venture upon the truth of these things. I must believe these things or perish. I believe that you must do the same. A man who says this has one essential proof that he preaches Christ's gospel. For this is what Christ did, and the apostles. We therefore try men who preach to us, by this rule. If you insist that you have a gospel which is essential to salvation, we will listen to it; but if it be not essential to salvation whether we believe you or those who in every thing differ from you, the gospel which you preach is another gospel, and the charitable Paul — he who wrote those remarkable words to the Corinthian Christians on charity, tells us, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." In the next words he repeats the same imprecation, to show that he speaks with deliberation: "As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."* There are some things, therefore, about which no man can properly be what is called "liberal"; he must be strict, he must be exclusive, in matters of life and death. A physician or surgeon can be liberal in everything but in his opinion of the disease or fracture; there he must be decided; but if he stands over us and, with an

* Galatians, i: 8, 9.

amiable face, hopes that all will be well, and declines to act with decision, and vigorously, lest it should seem like professional bigotry, he is an object of abhorrence. The lukewarm Laodiceans teach us what feelings indecision in religion excite in the mind of Christ. Therefore we say to those who preach to us, You must warn us that we must believe the gospel as you preach it, or we must perish. Apply it, if you will, to your "infant baptism," or your "immersion," or your "perfectability," or your "apostolical succession," and tell us that "he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Bring yourself and your gospel to that test. You will not, you cannot, erect non-essentials into a condition of salvation, if you are like Christ and the apostles. But, if you have nothing in your system which you are able thus to insist upon as essential to salvation, and if, notwithstanding, you profess to be a minister of Jesus, you are ashamed of the gospel, and we have reason to be ashamed of you, and we fear that Christ will be ashamed of you before his Father and before his angels.

Whatever others may believe, and whatever else may be true, Evangelical Christians, if they truly follow their belief, are safe. If there be no atonement for sin, they are safe. If there be no retributions after death, they are safe.

But suppose that there is only one way in which we

are forgiven and saved; suppose that the consequences of unpardoned sin are banishment from God, and that there is no probation after death. We have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. And now we do not turn and say to our fellow men, You must believe as we do because we thus believe, or you cannot be saved. But we do say, We do not expect to be saved but in this way. And it is not unkind in us, either in temporal or eternal things, to desire that our fellow men should be partakers of that on which our hopes depend.

Another thing which confirms us in our confident attachment to the evangelical system is, that we never heard of its being renounced on a dying bed. We have personal knowledge of instances in which every other system has been abjured in the last hours of life, for the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an unheard of thing for a dying person to say, I used to believe in the Savior's sufferings and death as the ground of pardon and acceptance with God. But now that I am dying, such a Savior is not the Savior which I need. This we never hear. But the ministers of every evangelical persuasion testify to cases in which dying persons have fled for refuge to the atoning Savior. Men are exceedingly apt to call on Christ in their extremity. Sea captains have spoken of this. David Hume played cards a short

time before he died, having been fixed in his chair for the purpose, with the determination of meeting death "like a philosopher." But as the cold shadows of the valley fell upon him, he needed a rod and staff to comfort him, and he cried, "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me, Jesus Christ save me." It was related in my hearing by one* who said that he heard it directly from a nurse who attended Thomas Paine in his last hours, that she overheard him commending his soul to the Savior, — "God help me, O thou Son of God, have mercy upon me." In the hour of sickness and weakness, the Almighty Redeemer, with his divine attributes and his human sympathies, seems to be just such a Savior as we need. We love in health and strength to trust in him, as well as in the swellings of Jordan. We wish our fellow men to do the same.

And now, if any will accept that which has been declared to be, substantially, the evangelical system, while we invite them cordially to come with us into that form of church order which is represented by New England Congregationalism, we do also most cordially bid them take their choice, and go to either of these evangelical denominations, to labor with us for Christ, and to be trained up for heaven; where we

* Washington Allston.

shall surely meet them, like friends ascending by the different sides of the same hill to keep a festival on the summit. There are three times when all the members of these evangelical sects think and feel alike on the subject of religion: When they first receive the pardon of their sins; when they are on their knees together in prayer; and when they are dying. The faith which they have in those moments is one and the same, in all languages and in all climes; they all declare that it is essential to their salvation, and to yours.

With Christian salutations, and giving the right hand of fellowship, to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, I will now close by repeating some lines of an eminent New England Congregational pastor, the Rev. Jonathan Mitchell, of Cambridge, who died in 1668, of whom it was said that "all New England shook when that pillar fell to the ground." The lines are part of an elegy which he made upon President Dunster, of Harvard College, with whom Mr. Mitchell and others had had great and serious differences of opinion as to the proper subjects of baptism. But when he died, Mr. Mitchell wrote an elegy upon him, containing these thoughts and feelings, which we ourselves shall severally have as we hear of the decease of one and another of those from whom we differ in unessential things, and when we, also, are on the verge of heaven:

"Where faith in Jesus is sincere,
That soul he, saving, pardoneth;—
What wants or errors else there be
That may and do consist herewith;

And though we be imperfect here
And in one mind can't often meet.—
Who know in part, in part may err;
Though faith be one, yet all can't see't.

Yet may we once the rest obtain
In everlasting bliss above,
Where Christ with perfect saints doth reign,
In perfect light and perfect love;—

There shall we all like-minded be;
Faith's unity is there full grown;
There, one truth all both love and see,
And thence we perfect are in one.

There Luther both, and Zuinglius,
Ridley and Hooper, there agree:
There all the truly righteous,
Sans Feud, live to eternity."

NOW THE GOD OF PEACE THAT BROUGHT AGAIN FROM THE DEAD OUR LORD JESUS, THAT GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP, THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT, MAKE YOU PERFECT IN EVERY GOOD WORK TO DO HIS WILL; WORKING IN YOU THAT WHICH IS WELL PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST; TO WHOM BE GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

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